

QUILTS FROM THE HEART

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Pin your quilt without hurting yourself!

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Don't break your back or bruise your knees

Before I actually start pinning the layers together, I think about how I plan to stitch.

- Do I plan to quilt from the top to the bottom or from side to side?
- Quilting the length of the quilt reduces the bulk of the quilt in the throat of the machine.
- How can I use the piecing to help me keep my design evenly spread across the surface and parallel to the edges?
- I can place pins more out of my stitching path so that I don't have to remove them too soon.
- Also, I have found that if the pins are parallel to my stitching path I am less likely to stitch over one.

If my quilt doesn't reach the edges of the board, I just stab in long pins to hold the layers together until I get things pinned.

One more great tip for quilting on a domestic machine. You can wear gloves to help control the surface without using a death grip. But gloves are hot and get in the way of removing safety pins. You can also treat your hands with Neutrogena Norwegian Formula hand cream. This glycerin based product will not only give you great hands. This in no way affects your quilt but does give you a grip without gloves.

Pinning a quilt without crawling on the floor

I use a cardboard dressmaker's cutting mat to pin quilts, Figure 1. I place it on the top of an island in my kitchen. It can also be used on top of a table. The cardboard prevents pins from scratching the table surface. This tool gives you a pinning surface that measures 40" by 72". That is enough to pin the majority of a twin size quilt. Once I have that much pinned, I release the quilt and push the unpinned side up on the mat to pin. Nothing creeps.

I have marked the exact center of the board and the center of the two ends. The center fold of the cardboard provides the other reference points.

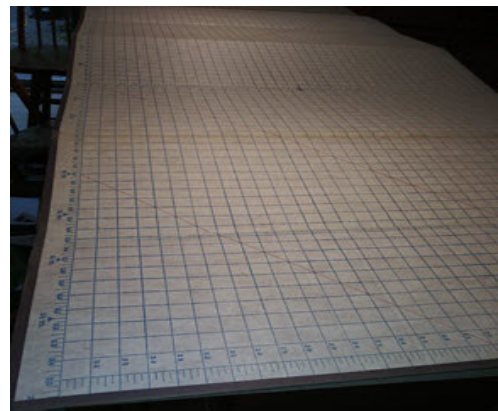


Figure 1. Cardboard Mat



Figure 2. Arranging Backing

I fold the quilt back into quarters right side out pressing creases in the centers of the sides and ends. Begin with the very center of the back. Stick a temporary pin to hold that spot. Then position and stick a pin in the two ends. These pins will hold the back in place while you carefully unfold the back, Figure 2.

Remove the pins and anchor the back with bulldog clips to the cardboard mat, Figure 3. I have a box of 12 and use 5 on each side and 2 on the end that overhangs my counter.

Next gently arrange your batting over the back. I again center everything.



Figure 3. Securing with Bulldog Clips

The next step is to center and arrange your top over the two previous layers. Again, center things. It pays to do a walk around to be sure that the batting and backing extend slightly beyond the quilt top.

At this point I move the bulldog clips so that they hold all 3 layers securely in place and start pinning away, Figure 4.

Once I have pinned all of the 40" x 72" surface, I remove the clips and slide the unpinned portion onto my board. I work on 1 unpinned edge at a time.

This so beats the back breaking knee crunching process of working on the floor. It makes the prospect of quilting much happier.



Figure 4. Pin all 3 layers together